

# Daily Current Affairs





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10 MCQ QUIZ

- 
- “Genius is patience.”

**TERRORISM IN MANIPUR**  
21 Nagas freed; bodies  
of 2 Kuki men found  
NEWS • PAGE 4

**LET'S BEGIN AFRESH!**  
Every MP  
can speak but  
only as per  
rules: Speaker  
NEWS • PAGE 4

**14 MONTH HIGH**  
Retail inflation rises  
to 3.2% in February  
BUSINESS • PAGE 12

**PARLEY**  
Is India tailing  
the U.S. in its  
West Asia policy?  
Is India's stand affecting  
energy and economy?  
OPINION • PAGE 9

**PERFECT HITCH**  
Valverde's hat-trick  
powers Real past City  
SPORTS • PAGE 17

**NEARBY**

**Farooq flags  
deeply rooted  
hate after attack**

**JAMMU**  
Former Jammu and Kashmir  
Chief Minister and National  
Congress president Farooq  
Abdullah on Thursday said  
hate was deeply rooted in  
today's India, as he demanded  
"a thorough inquiry" into a  
resident's attack on him  
after firing two shots at him on  
Wednesday. **» PAGE 4**

**'Parental income  
alone can't decide  
creamy layer'**

**NEW DELHI**  
Setting the confusion over  
how to calculate income to  
determine the creamy layer  
status of OMC candidates for  
reservation, the Supreme Court  
has ruled that it "cannot be  
decided solely on the basis of  
the (parental) income". This  
may widen the quota quota to  
include the children of public  
sector officials who had earlier  
been excluded. **» PAGE 6**

**PIB fast-check  
unit busts 50  
'Pak' deepfakes**

**NEW DELHI**  
The fast-track unit of the Press  
Information Bureau (PIB), in  
the past month, has flagged  
over 30 cases of deepfakes,  
misquoted videos, misuse of  
various other types of  
misinformation on social  
media platforms, many of  
which, it found, were posted by  
"Pakistan propaganda"  
handles. **» PAGE 6**

**Court rejects plea  
to shift Iran to  
a private hospital**

**ISLAMABAD**  
A High Court in Pakistan has  
rejected a petition from the  
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf to shift  
its jailed leader and former  
prime minister Imran Khan to a  
private hospital for spe-  
cialised treatment. It ordered  
the constitution of a team of  
doctors to examine him. Mr.  
Khan had been complaining of  
deteriorating vision in his right  
eye, his lawyer said. **» PAGE 14**

**China passes law  
on 'ethnic unity  
and progress'**

**BEIJING**  
China passed a law on a  
"shared national identity"  
among the country's 56 ethnic  
minority groups on Thursday  
as the national People's  
Congress, a move critics say  
will further erode the identity  
of people who are not majority  
Han Chinese and risk making  
them "unlawfully" a separated  
jurisdiction by law. **» PAGE 14**

# India's crude supply secure, no fuel shortage, Minister tells LS

Amid West Asia crisis, priority is to give cooking gas to households, says Petroleum Minister Puri; 20% of average monthly commercial LPG requirement to be allocated by OMCs; Rahul says govt. 'bartered' right to determine ties with oil suppliers

**Sandeep Khanna**  
NEW DELHI

There is no shortage of petrol, diesel, kerosene, and aviation turbine fuel in the country, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday, adding that India's crude supply has been secured amid the conflict in West Asia.

"This is not the moment for rumour-mongering or fake narratives. India is navigating the most severe global energy disruption recorded in history," Mr. Puri said.

The Centre has also introduced regulation of commercial LPG cylinders to prevent hoarding and diversion, he said.

"In a major decision, 20% of the average monthly commercial LPG requirement will be allocated from today by OMCs (oil-marketing companies), in coordination with the state governments to ensure there is no hoarding or black-marketing," Mr. Puri said.

Commercial LPG is sold in a "fully deregulated" or "open" market without subsidy, registration, booking, or purchase limits, he said.

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Fuel crisis: Petrolists wait at a fuel station in Chennai on Thursday as rumours of fuel shortage triggered massive panic-buying. **» 20TH FEBRUARY 2020**

## India co-sponsors UN resolution condemning Iran

India has co-sponsored a resolution at the United Nations Security Council that condemned actions by Iran aimed at interfering with navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. **» PAGE 8**

## Premature to discuss Iran nod for Indian ships'

The External Affairs Ministry on Thursday said it was "premature" to discuss reports about India getting permission from Iran for oil tankers and cargo ships to cross the Strait of Hormuz. **» PAGE 8**

## Modi discusses West Asia crisis with Peshkshian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday spoke to Iranian President Masoud Peshkshian and expressed deep concern over the escalation of tensions in West Asia and the "serious situation" it poses. **» PAGE 8**

# New Supreme Leader of Iran vows to keep Strait of Hormuz shut

In his first public comments since becoming Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Majdha Khameini on Thursday asked neighbouring Arab countries to shut U.S. bases "as soon as possible", demanded reparations for the material losses during the war, and vowed to keep the Strait of Hormuz "closed".

"We will enact reparations from the enemy, even if it refuses, we will seize from its assets as much as we deem necessary and if that too proves impossible, we will destroy an equivalent portion of its assets," Mr. Khameini said. His father, the former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was assassinated in an Israeli strike on February 28.

"Plucking to average 'the blood of the martyrs', Mr. Khameini said the "afflictive and regret-inducing defence" by Iranian forces would continue "for the moment, the leverage of the Strait of Hormuz must certainly continue to be used," he said.

"Non-Hormuz" sources "India's crude supply position is secure, and volumes secured exceed what Hormuz would have delivered," he said.

"Domestic petrol gas and compressed natural gas for vehicles would continue to receive full supply, while enough to decide who bears the cost of repairs, and from guarantees against future aggression," the President said.

"The number of ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, the critical maritime choke point connecting the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea through which roughly 20% to 34% of world's oil passes through, has come down to single digits in recent days as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has targeted cargo vessels in the Gulf waters. There were also reports that the Strait is being mined by the Guards.

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# SC to study what constitutes 'personal data' in DPDP laws

Indian Supreme Court will study what constitutes 'personal data' in the new Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) laws, a bench of three judges has said.

**Indian Supreme Court**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to examine "what constitutes 'personal data' under India's new digital personal data law which restricts how data privacy norms to block the right to information."

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the need to define "personal data" and "personal information" has arisen following the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Act, 2012 and the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 and the ability of journalists to establish a data protection regulator that is

structurally dependent upon the Executive," the petition said.

For once, the petition said, section 44(3) of the Act imposes a "blanket ban" on Right to Information (RTI) applications against state-owned or controlled entities.

"The term 'public interest' has been deleted from the DPDP Act, journalists cannot access data which is in public interest. A journalist need not have per-

sonal data, but needs information, which is in the public interest to satisfy the public's right to information and knowledge," Mr. Jaisingh submitted.

"No clear definition" of the term "public interest" has been deleted from the DPDP Act, journalists cannot access data which is in public interest. A journalist need not have per-

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# US begins probing India's 'discriminatory trade policies'

The U.S. has announced investigations against 16 economies, including India, on whether actions or policies of these countries "are unreasonable or discriminatory and burden or restrict the free trade of the globe."

**T.C.A. Shanidhaan**  
NEW DELHI

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# India's crude supply secure, no fuel shortage, Minister tells LS

Amid West Asia crisis, priority is to give cooking gas to households, says Petroleum Minister Puri; 20% of average monthly commercial LPG requirement to be allocated by OMCs; Rahul says govt. 'bartered' right to determine ties with oil suppliers

**Sandeep Phukan**  
NEW DELHI

**T**here is no shortage of petrol, diesel, kerosene, and aviation turbine fuel in the country, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday, adding that India's crude supply has been secured amid the conflict in West Asia.

The Minister was responding to a notice submitted by Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on the shortage of LPG or cooking gas.

"This is not the moment for rumour-mongering or fake narratives. India is navigating the most severe global energy disruption in recorded history," Mr. Puri said.

**Anti-hoarding measure**  
It is the "foremost priority" of the government that the kitchens of over 33 crore families, especially the "poor and the underprivileged, do not face any shortage" of gas, Mr. Puri said.

The Centre has also introduced regulation of commercial LPG cylinders to prevent hoarding and diversion, he said.

"In a major decision, 20% of the average monthly commercial LPG requirement will be allocated from today by OMCs [oil-marketing companies], in coordination with the State governments so that there is no hoarding or black marketing," Mr. Puri said.

Commercial LPG is sold in a "fully deregulated over-the-counter market without subsidy, registration, booking, or purchase limits" which can let a buyer procure "cylinders in any quantity" Mr. Puri said. Without restriction, such bulk purchase "could have been diverted to the grey market at the expense of genuine commercial



**Fuel rush:** Motorists wait at a fuel station in Chennai on Thursday as rumours of fuel shortage triggered massive panic buying. © 2018 ANANDAN

## India co-sponsors UN resolution condemning Iran

NEW DELHI

India has co-sponsored a resolution at the United Nations Security Council that condemned actions by Iran aimed at interfering with navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. » PAGE 5

consumers and domestic households alike", the Minister said.

"Every citizen, regardless of political affiliation, has a stake in that. India must stand united behind its energy warriors, behind the institutions managing this crisis, and behind the national interest."

He noted that field reports of shortage indicate "hoarding and panic-booking at the distributor and retail level, driven by consumer anxiety rather than any actual supply shortage."

Raising concerns about India's energy security, Mr. Gandhi had alleged that the Narendra Modi government had "bartered" the right to determine its relationship with different oil suppliers with the U.S. because of a "compromise".

## 'Premature to discuss Iran nod for Indian ships'

NEW DELHI

The External Affairs Ministry on Thursday said it was rather "premature" to discuss reports about India getting permission from Iran for oil tankers and cargo ships to cross the Strait of Hormuz. » PAGE 5

The Congress leader said there is widespread panic about LPG, restaurants are closing, street vendors are affected and that "the pain has just started".

### 'Puzzling fact'

"The foundation of every single nation is its energy security. And I do not say this lightly, but allowing the U.S. to decide who we buy oil and gas from, whether we buy oil from Russia or not, whether our relationship with different oil suppliers can be decided by us, this is what has been bartered. This is a very puzzling fact for me as to why a nation the size of India would allow the president of any other nation to give us permission to buy Russian oil, to decide who our relationships are with," Mr. Gandhi said.

## Modi discusses West Asia crisis with Pezeshkian

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday spoke to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and expressed deep concern over the escalation of tensions in West Asia and the 'serious situation'. » PAGE 5

He, however, could not complete his speech as he sought to draw certain inferences about Mr. Puri which was disallowed by Speaker Om Birla who pointed out that the Opposition leader should have given prior notice before making any allegation on the floor of the House.

"Speak on the issue for which you have given a notice. If you want to speak on something else, then give a separate notice," the Speaker told Mr. Gandhi.

Subsequently, Mr. Puri informed the Lok Sabha that India was importing approximately 60% of its LPG requirements from Gulf countries such as Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait before the start of the conflict but have diversified its supply chains since then.

"Procurement has now been actively diversified, with cargoes being secured from the U.S., Norway, Canada, Algeria, and Russia, in addition to available Gulf sources," he said amid constant sloganeering from the Opposition members.

"The House should be clear on this: the rush-booking pressure in some localities reflects a demand distortion, not a production or supply failure," he added.

The Minister said it is a "first time in recorded history" that the Strait of Hormuz, which facilitates the passage of 20% of world's crude, natural gas and LPG, has been closed to commercial shipping for 13 days now.

### 'Non-Hormuz' sources

"India's crude supply position is secure, and volumes secured exceed what Hormuz would have delivered," he said, adding that the share of "non-Hormuz" sources in India's crude imports had risen to around 70%, from about 55% before the crisis.

Mr. Puri said India now sources crude oil from 40 countries compared to 27 in 2006-07. Refineries across the country were operating at high-capacity utilisation, in some cases exceeding 100%, he said.

Domestic piped gas and compressed natural gas for vehicles would continue to receive full supply, while industrial and manufacturing consumers would receive up to 80% of their previous six-month average consumption, Mr. Puri said.

Fertiliser plants would receive up to 70% of their earlier allocation to protect agricultural supply chains, while refineries and petrochemical units would absorb managed reductions, he said.

(With inputs from Saptaparno Ghosh)

## 1. Government Statement on Fuel Supply

- India currently has **no shortage of petrol, diesel, kerosene or aviation turbine fuel** — भारत में वर्तमान में पेट्रोल, डीजल, केरोसीन और एटीएफ की कोई कमी नहीं है।
- Petroleum Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** informed the Lok Sabha that India's crude supply is secure — पेट्रोलियम मंत्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी ने लोकसभा में कहा कि भारत की कच्चे तेल की आपूर्ति सुरक्षित है।
- The government assured that **domestic cooking gas supply will be prioritised for households** — सरकार ने आश्वासन दिया कि घरेलू एलपीजी आपूर्ति को प्राथमिकता दी जाएगी।

## 2. Impact of West Asia Crisis on Energy

- The West Asia conflict has created **global energy market disruption** — पश्चिम एशिया संघर्ष ने वैश्विक ऊर्जा बाजार में अस्थिरता पैदा की है।
- Concerns emerged due to **shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz** — होर्मुज जलडमरूमध्य में नौवहन बाधाओं के कारण चिंता बढ़ी।
- Rumours triggered **panic buying at some fuel stations** — अफवाहों के कारण कुछ पेट्रोल पंपों पर घबराहट में खरीदारी हुई।

### 3. LPG Supply Management

- Government announced that **20% of monthly commercial LPG will be reallocated** to households if needed — आवश्यकता पड़ने पर मासिक वाणिज्यिक एलपीजी का 20% घरेलू उपयोग हेतु आवंटित किया जाएगा।
- Aim is to ensure **33 crore households receiving LPG do not face shortage** — उद्देश्य है कि लगभग 33 करोड़ परिवारों को गैस की कमी न हो।

### 4. Diversification of Oil Imports

- India has diversified crude imports from multiple countries — भारत ने कच्चे तेल के आयात को कई देशों में विविधीकृत किया है।
- Major suppliers now include:
  - United States — अमेरिका
  - Norway — नॉर्वे
  - Canada — कनाडा
  - Algeria — अल्जीरिया
  - Russia — रूस

## 5. Strategic Energy Security Measures

- India now imports oil from **around 40 countries** compared to **27 in 2006-07** — भारत अब लगभग 40 देशों से तेल आयात करता है, जबकि 2006-07 में यह संख्या 27 थी।
- Refineries are operating at **very high capacity (sometimes above 100%)** — भारत की रिफाइनरियाँ उच्च क्षमता पर चल रही हैं।
- Industrial sectors may receive **80% of average supply during crisis** — संकट में औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों को औसत खपत का लगभग 80% दिया जा सकता है।

## 6. Strait of Hormuz Significance

- Strait of Hormuz handles **about 20% of global crude and LNG trade** — होर्मुज जलडमरूमध्य से विश्व के लगभग 20% कच्चे तेल और एलएनजी का व्यापार होता है।
- It connects **Persian Gulf with Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea** — यह फारस की खाड़ी को ओमान की खाड़ी और अरब सागर से जोड़ता है।
- Countries around it include:
  - Iran — ईरान
  - Oman — ओमान
  - UAE — संयुक्त अरब अमीरात



Indicator

Data

India crude import dependence

~85%

India LPG import dependence

~60%

Strategic Petroleum Reserve  
capacity

~5.33 million tonnes

## India Strategic Petroleum Reserve Locations

Location

State

Vishakhapatnam

Andhra Pradesh

Mangaluru

Karnataka

Padur

Karnataka

Chandikhol (Phase II)

Odisha

Padur Expansion

Karnataka

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| Country       | Approx Share                       |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Russia        | Largest supplier after Ukraine war |
| Iraq          | Major traditional supplier         |
| Saudi Arabia  | Key Gulf supplier                  |
| UAE           | Important partner                  |
| United States | Growing share                      |

- **1973 Oil Crisis**

- Triggered by **OPEC oil embargo against Western nations** — 1973 में ओपेक द्वारा तेल प्रतिबंध।

- Caused **global inflation and recession** — वैश्विक मुद्रास्फीति और आर्थिक संकट।

- **1991 Gulf War**

- Iraq's invasion of Kuwait disrupted oil supply — इराक द्वारा कुवैत पर हमला।

- India faced **severe foreign exchange crisis** — भारत को गंभीर भुगतान संकट का सामना करना पड़ा।

- **2022 Russia-Ukraine War**

- India increased **discounted Russian oil imports** — भारत ने रियायती रूसी तेल आयात बढ़ाया।

- Consider the following statements regarding India's energy security:
- India imports crude oil from around 40 countries.
- Strait of Hormuz handles around one-fifth of global oil trade.
- India is fully self-sufficient in crude oil production.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

| Exam                | Year | Question   | Answer  |
|---------------------|------|--|---|
| UPSC CSE Prelims    | 2022 | With reference to India's energy security, consider the following statements regarding Strategic Petroleum Reserves in India. Which are correct? | India maintains reserves at Vishakhapatnam, Mangaluru and Padur |
| UPSC CSE Prelims    | 2023 | Consider the following about LNG terminals in India. Which are operational?  | Dahej, Hazira, Kochi etc  |
| UPSC CSE Prelims    | 2024 | Which of the following straits is a major global oil transit chokepoint connecting Persian Gulf to Gulf of Oman?                                 | Strait of Hormuz  |
| State PSC (various) | 2025 | Strait of Hormuz connects which two water bodies?  | Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman                                   |

UN resolution against Iran

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## 1. Main Development

- India co-sponsored a **United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Iran's attacks on GCC countries** — भारत ने खाड़ी सहयोग परिषद (GCC) देशों पर ईरान के हमलों की निंदा करने वाले संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद प्रस्ताव का सह-प्रायोजन किया।
- The resolution demanded **immediate cessation of attacks by Iran** — प्रस्ताव में ईरान से तत्काल हमले रोकने की मांग की गई।
- It also condemned attempts to **interfere with international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz** — होर्मुज जलडमरूमध्य में अंतरराष्ट्रीय नौवहन में बाधा डालने के प्रयासों की निंदा की गई।

## 2. Voting Pattern in UNSC

- The resolution was supported by **13 UNSC members** — 13 सदस्यों ने समर्थन किया।
- **Russia and China abstained** — रूस और चीन ने मतदान से परहेज किया।

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### 3. Countries Mentioned in the Resolution

The resolution addressed attacks on GCC countries including:

| GCC Country  | Capital     |
|--------------|-------------|
| Bahrain      | Manama      |
| Kuwait       | Kuwait City |
| Oman         | Muscat      |
| Qatar        | Doha        |
| Saudi Arabia | Riyadh      |
| UAE          | Abu Dhabi   |

These countries lie around the **Persian Gulf region** — ये देश फारस की खाड़ी क्षेत्र में स्थित हैं।

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# India's Position on the West Asia Crisis

## 1. Priority for Safety of Civilians

- India emphasised **protection of civilians in the conflict** — भारत ने संघर्ष में नागरिकों की सुरक्षा पर जोर दिया।
- MEA stated that **India has repeatedly issued statements calling for restraint** — विदेश मंत्रालय ने कहा कि भारत ने संयम की अपील की है।

## 2. Strategic Interests in Gulf Region

India's stance is influenced by several factors:

### Indian Diaspora

- Around **10 million Indians live in West Asia** — लगभग 1 करोड़ भारतीय पश्चिम एशिया में रहते हैं।

### Energy Dependence

- About **50% of India's crude oil imports** come from Gulf countries — भारत के लगभग 50% कच्चे तेल आयात खाड़ी देशों से आते हैं।
- Around **90% of LPG imports** also come from the region — एलपीजी का लगभग 90% आयात भी इसी क्षेत्र से होता है।

# Diplomatic Debate

## Criticism of India's Position

- Some critics argued India **condemned Iran but not the US or Israel actions** — आलोचकों ने कहा कि भारत ने ईरान की निंदा की लेकिन अमेरिका या इजराइल की नहीं।
- Critics said the response seemed **unbalanced** — प्रतिक्रिया असंतुलित प्रतीत हुई।

## Government Response

- India clarified it supports **peace and civilian protection** — भारत ने स्पष्ट किया कि वह शांति और नागरिक सुरक्षा का समर्थन करता है।
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Strait

Connects

Importance

Strait of Hormuz

Persian Gulf – Gulf  
of Oman

Oil chokepoint

Bab-el-Mandeb

Red Sea – Gulf of  
Aden

Suez route access

Strait of Malacca

Indian Ocean –  
Pacific Ocean

Asia trade route



# 'Parental income alone cannot set creamy layer status'

Abhinav Lakshman  
NEW DELHI

Settling the decades-long confusion over how to calculate wealth or income to determine the creamy layer status of OBC candidates for reservation, the Supreme Court ruled this week that it "cannot be decided solely on the basis of the [parental] income".

This is likely to widen the reservation pool to include the children of senior public sector officials who had earlier been excluded on the basis of their parents' annual salary income being above the ₹8 lakh threshold.

The court said the framework to exclude the creamy layer from the OBC quota is clear that parental income from salaries and agricultural land are to be kept out while applying the income/wealth test.

A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and R. Mahadevan was hearing an appeal by the Union government against lower court rulings in favour of such OBC candidates. The cases arise from confusion over how to apply the income/wealth test for OBC children of PSU/PSB officials in the absence of equivalence with government posts, and whether income from salaries can be included in these calculations. During the hearings, OBC candidates selected in civil services examinations over the past decade argued that the Centre had incorrectly deemed them as part of the excluded creamy layer by including the salaries of their parents who worked in Central and State PSUs.

## 'Based on status'

In its March 11 judgment, the court noted that the creamy layer exclusion criteria were "status-based rather than purely income-based, reflecting the policy understanding that advancement within the governmental service hierarchy denotes social progression independent of fluctuating salary levels".

When the OBC quota was introduced in 1993, a guiding charter was created to exclude OBC candidates whose families had accumulated certain social and economic privileges over the years, known as the creamy layer.

This would then allow reservation benefits only for those declared as "non-creamy layer" candidates, based on several criteria,



The SC said the OBC creamy layer exclusion criteria is status-based.

including a crucial income or wealth test.

The 1993 charter of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) had declared some OBC families ineligible on the basis of their occupations.

Thus, children of people in constitutional posts, senior Central and State government employees, members of the armed forces, and property owners supposedly could not avail themselves of the OBC quota for the civil services.

However, exceptions were carved out of these exclusions: for instance, children of MPs and MLAs; government officials who have been promoted, not hired, into senior positions; and owners of unstratified agricultural land, among others, are all eligible for OBC quotas, subject to a parental annual income limit of ₹8 lakh.

However, the DoPT has differentiated in how this income test is applied. With the help of a clarificatory letter issued in October 2004, the interpretation that has been applied was that parental salaries could be counted separately to apply the income test for determining the creamy layer for candidates whose parents worked in Central or State PSUs, an interpretation that was contested in the present cases.

## 'Unequal treatment'

Delivering the judgment in this batch of cases, the Supreme Court said, "Treating the children of those employed in PSUs or private employment, etc., as being excluded from the benefit of reservation only on the basis of their income derived from salaries, and without reference to their posts (whether Group A or B, or Group C or D) would certainly lead to hostile discrimination between parties who are similarly placed and would amount to equals being treated unequally."

## 1. Supreme Court Ruling

- The Supreme Court stated that **creamy layer status for OBC reservation cannot be decided only on the basis of parental income** — सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने कहा कि ओबीसी आरक्षण में क्रीमी लेयर की पहचान केवल माता-पिता की आय के आधार पर तय नहीं की जा सकती।
  - The Court emphasised that **creamy layer exclusion is primarily "status-based" rather than purely income-based** — न्यायालय ने कहा कि क्रीमी लेयर का निर्धारण मुख्यतः "सामाजिक-स्थिति आधारित" होना चाहिए, न कि केवल आय आधारित।
  - This ruling aims to **clarify confusion in civil services examination eligibility and reservation benefits** — यह निर्णय सिविल सेवा परीक्षाओं में आरक्षण पात्रता से जुड़े लंबे समय से चले आ रहे भ्रम को दूर करने के लिए दिया गया है।
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## Background of the Case

### Case Being Heard

- The judgement emerged during hearings in **Union Government appeals against decisions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court** — यह निर्णय पंजाब एवं हरियाणा उच्च न्यायालय के फैसले के खिलाफ केंद्र सरकार की अपील की सुनवाई के दौरान सामने आया।
- Bench: **Justice P.S. Narasimha and Justice R. Mahadevan** — पीठ में न्यायमूर्ति पी.एस. नरसिम्हा और न्यायमूर्ति आर. महादेवन शामिल थे।

## Issue Raised

- Confusion existed regarding **whether salary of parents working in PSUs or government service should be included in income calculation** — यह विवाद था कि पीएसयू या सरकारी सेवा में कार्यरत माता-पिता की आय को क्रीमी लेयर निर्धारण में कैसे गिना जाए।
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## Creamy Layer Concept

### Meaning

- Creamy layer refers to **economically and socially advanced members within the OBC category who are excluded from reservation benefits** — क्रीमी लेयर ओबीसी वर्ग के आर्थिक और सामाजिक रूप से उन्नत वर्ग को दर्शाता है जिन्हें आरक्षण लाभ से बाहर रखा जाता है।

### Purpose

- To ensure **reservation benefits reach genuinely backward sections** — आरक्षण का लाभ वास्तविक रूप से पिछड़े वर्गों तक पहुँचे।
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# Key Observations by the Supreme Court

## 1. Status Based Criteria

- Creamy layer exclusion is **based on social advancement and occupation of parents** — क्रीमी लेयर निर्धारण में सामाजिक प्रगति और माता-पिता का पेशा महत्वपूर्ण है।
- High-ranking government positions automatically place families in creamy layer — उच्च सरकारी पदों वाले परिवार स्वतः क्रीमी लेयर में आते हैं।

## 2. Income Alone Not Sufficient

- Sole reliance on income could create **unequal treatment among similarly placed candidates** — केवल आय के आधार पर निर्णय लेने से समान स्थिति वाले उम्मीदवारों में असमानता उत्पन्न हो सकती है।

## 3. Treatment of PSU Employees

- Children of **PSU employees were earlier sometimes excluded from OBC benefits** — पहले पीएसयू कर्मचारियों के बच्चों को कई मामलों में आरक्षण से बाहर रखा जाता था।
  - Court noted that **this interpretation could be discriminatory** — न्यायालय ने कहा कि ऐसा करना भेदभावपूर्ण हो सकता है।
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# Income Limit for Creamy Layer

| Category                       | Income Limit                              |
|--------------------------------|---|
| OBC Creamy Layer Annual Income | ₹8 lakh                                   |
| Applicable for                 | Civil services & central government jobs  |
| Reviewed by                    | Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) |

## Important point:

- **Income from salary and agriculture may be treated differently in some interpretations** — वेतन और कृषि आय के आकलन में अलग-अलग तरीके अपनाए गए हैं।

# Evolution of Creamy Layer Concept

## 1992 – Indra Sawhney Case (Mandal Judgment)

- Supreme Court introduced **creamy layer exclusion for OBC reservations** — सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने ओबीसी आरक्षण में क्रीमी लेयर सिद्धांत लागू किया।
- Reservation capped at **50%** — कुल आरक्षण सीमा 50% निर्धारित की।

## 1993

- Government formally introduced **OBC reservation in central services** — केंद्र सरकार ने ओबीसी आरक्षण लागू किया।

## 2004 DoPT Clarification

- Parent's **salary from PSU counted differently from government posts** — पीएसयू कर्मचारियों के वेतन के आकलन को लेकर अलग व्याख्या सामने आई।

## Categories Automatically Treated as Creamy Layer

| Category                    | Explanation                             |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Constitutional post holders | MPs, MLAs, Judges                       |
| Group A / Class I officers  | Senior civil servants                   |
| Armed forces officers       | Above Colonel rank                      |
| High income professionals   | Doctors, engineers etc with high income |

These families' children **cannot claim OBC reservation** — ऐसे परिवारों के बच्चे ओबीसी आरक्षण का लाभ नहीं ले सकते।

# Constitutional Provisions

| Article       | Provision                               |
|---------------|---|
| Article 15(4) | Special provisions for backward classes |
| Article 16(4) | Reservation in public employment        |
| Article 340   | Commission for backward classes         |

## Economic and Social Implications

### Social Justice

- Prevents **elite capture of reservation benefits** — आरक्षण का लाभ संपन्न वर्ग तक सीमित होने से रोकता है।

### Administrative Impact

- Clarifies **civil services eligibility rules** — सिविल सेवा पात्रता नियमों को स्पष्ट करता है।

### Political Impact

- Reservation policies remain **politically sensitive issues in India** — भारत में आरक्षण नीति अत्यंत संवेदनशील राजनीतिक विषय है।

## Fact

## Details

OBC population (approx estimate)

~40–45% of India

OBC reservation in central jobs

27%

Creamy layer rule applies to

OBC only

Not applicable to

SC / ST

- Consider the following statements regarding the OBC creamy layer:
- The creamy layer concept was introduced by the Supreme Court in the Indra Sawhney case.
- Creamy layer exclusion applies to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- The current income limit for creamy layer is ₹8 lakh.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3



A passenger train to North Korea's Pyongyang leaves Beijing Railway Station in China on Thursday. AP/China

### Beijing-Pyongyang train service is back after a six-year gap

#### Beijing

The first passenger train service between the Chinese and North Korean capitals left Beijing rail-way station on Thursday, ending a six-year gap, as China moves to shore up cross-border infrastruc-ture and rebuild ties with its neighbour.

Train K27 will arrive in the North Korean capi-tal at 6:07 p.m. on Friday, after a journey of 24 hours and 40 minutes skirting north of the Bohai Sea with a stopover in the border city of Tianjin, China's railway authority said.

China and North Korea are "friendly neigh-bour" and across-border passenger train service facilitates people-to-people exchange, a foreign ministry spokesperson told reporters on Thurs-day. China also backs stronger communication between both sides to ease such exchanges, the spokesperson added.

The service was suspended when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020. North Korea is largely closed to foreign tour-ists, with few exceptions, largely for tourism tour groups under restricted arrangements, say travel agencies organising trips to the country.

The service linking the capitals will operate four days a week in both directions, running on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, China's railway authority said in a notice.

Tickets, restricted to business visa holders, were sold out for Thursday's trip, but those for March 11 were still available, a Beijing travel agency said. The shorter Dandong-Pyongyang link will operate daily in both directions, the official news agency Xinhua said.

# The Iran war exposes Indian migrant workers in Gulf to an uncertain future

The Gulf's prosperity rests not only on oil but also on the belief that it is safer than the rest of West Asia. War damages that belief, more than 52,000 Indians have already returned and the number may only rise; for Kerala, which heavily relies on remittances, any Gulf shock becomes a social crisis

#### NEWS ANALYSIS

R.M. Meethi

With the Iran war casting a long shadow over the Gulf over the past two weeks, what once ap-peared to be a region of glittering airports, finan-cial hubs and endless con-struction now looks ex-tremely vulnerable. India has already acknowledged the seriousness of the cri-sis. The External Affairs Mi-nistry had said that within less than a week of the war in the Gulf region begin-ning, more than 52,000 In-dians had already returned from the Gulf under spe-cial arrangements, and the number may rise in the coming days. India has also issued repeated advisories on West Asia, showing that this is a real regional emergency.

For the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, the danger is not only mili-tary but structural. These states built their prosperity on stability, open sea lanes, energy exports, glo-bal finance and migration to labour. A prolonged war threatens every one of these pillars. India's strat-egy is light is also clear enough. Tehran remains ac-tual GCC monarchies not as neutral neighbours but as part of a wider U.S.-led se-



Back home: Passengers from Indian air service at the India Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi on March 3 following the conflict between the U.S., Israel and Iran in West Asia. Source: news-press

curity architecture in the region. That perception is influenced by the long pre-sence of Western military bases and by the political afterlife of the Abraham Accords, which began for-mal normalisation between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain in 2020. In its view, the Gulf cannot claim neutrality while re-maining tied to American security power and, in some cases, to new agree-ments with Israel.

The GCC states have tried to diversify, especial-ly the UAE and Saudi Ara-bia, but diversification does not remove vulner-ability. It only changes its form. Dubai depends on confidence, connectivity and circulation. Saudi Ara-bia's large-scale transfor-mation plans require ener-

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### March of the faithful



Against curbs: Members of the South African Church Defenders hold a protest march in Durban on Thursday against the proposed measures by the Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Rights Commission to tighten oversight of churches. This cannot erode allegations that some organisations exploit congregants through speculative financial practices, says the marchers.

# Cambodia aims to shut down all online scam centres within weeks

#### Associated Press PHNOM PENH

Cambodia hopes to shut down all of the country's notorious online scam centres by the end of next month, the head of the national police said on Wednesday. Senior Minister Chhina Rintarath, in charge of the Commission for Combating Online Scams, told The Associated Press in an interview that the govern-ment since July had target-ed 250 locations believed to be involved in the in-ternet criminal activity, and has shut down about 80%, or 200, of them.

He said police would carry out surprise ac-tivities after April in an at-tempt to keep the scam centres from re-emerging.



The police on Tuesday raided a suspected scam centre in Phnom Penh, arresting 10 Cambodians and 10 Chinese at their desks. AP

Cambodia has launched previous crackdowns against online scam centres but without major effect. "The real question is whether this effort targets the system that enables the scammers to run their busi-ness where scams happen," commented Jacob Sun, an expert on transnational

finance and cryptocurrency scams, often after being recruited with false job offers and then forced to work in conditions of near-slavery.

Chhina Rintarath said that in the latest crackdown the government has filed 79 legal cases involving 697 al-leged scam ringmasters and their associates.

#### 10,000 repatriated

At the same time, it has re-patriated almost 10,000 scam centre workers from 23 countries, he said, with fewer than 1,000 awaiting official repatriation. Others who have escaped or been released from scam centres have gone home on their own. Cambodia has a reputation for being involved in human trafficking, especially China and the United States, to combat the problem, he said.

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# Ukraine's tech evangelist Defence Minister is preaching the 'future of war'

#### Agence France-Presse KYIV

Ukraine's newly installed Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov walked on stage like a stand-up comedian to take the mic in front of journalists in Kyiv as a sleek slideshow zoomed across a map of the country.

The Ted talk style brief-ing — a departure from the ministry's previously stiff approach — was hosted by the energy Mr. Fedorov is trying to inject into Ukraine's war machine, four years into the Russian invasion.

He began his career in digital marketing and his first role in government were spearheading online services for citizens, in-cluding the country's now ubiquitous state services app Diia.

His early bet on drones seems obvious now in a war that has come to be dominated by them.

He also reached out to U.S. tech titan Elon Musk to secure Starlink satellite connectivity for Ukrainian troops.

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Young blood: Appointed in January, the 35-year-old Mykhailo Fedorov is Ukraine's youngest ever Defence Minister. AP

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# Ukraine's tech evangelist Defence Minister is preaching the 'future of war'

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The Ted-talk style briefing – a departure from the Ministry's previously stiff approach – encapsulates the energy Mr. Fedorov is trying to inject into Ukraine's war machine, four years into the Russian invasion.

Appointed in January, the 35-year-old with short salt-and-pepper hair is Ukraine's youngest ever Defence Minister.

On a mission to modernise the army, he took over

an apparatus facing stretched air defences, financial uncertainty, stalled peace talks, recruitment problems and widespread bureaucracy and war fatigue. "We will turn the war into a data platform," said Mr. Fedorov, wearing his trademark sweatshirt and jeans in a speech punctuated with jokes.

"We will take all the data and see what works. Everything that works well will proceed," he said – a personal mantra that would not appear out of place in Silicon Valley.

## 'Moment of truth'

Mr. Fedorov has spent much of the war promoting advanced technology, like drones, as a way to offset Ukraine's shortages in manpower, money and ammunition.

He began his career in digital marketing and his first roles in government were spearheading online services for citizens, including the country's now ubiquitous state services app Diia.

Russia's 2022 invasion – which saw his home town in the southern Zaporizhzhia region occupied – has only cemented his faith in technology.

"It was a moment of truth. When someone attacks your country, you do everything asymmetrical that is in your power," said his then-advisor Anton Melnyk, summarising Mr. Fedorov's philosophy.

His Ministry for digital transformation took to social media to call out Western companies still working in Russia, shaming them into breaking ties.



**Young blood:** Appointed in January, the 35-year-old Mykhailo Fedorov is Ukraine's youngest ever Defence Minister. AFP

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His early bet on drones seems obvious now in a war that has come to be dominated by them.

But to many, he was a rare and vital early advocate.

In 2023, activist Sergiy Sternenko, known for his fundraising efforts for the army, posted an emotional video to his two million followers, pleading with the government to quickly invest in drones.

"Mykhailo was really the first to call me literally an hour or two after that," Mr. Sternenko, now an ad-

visor to Mr. Fedorov, told AFP.

Within two days, he had been invited to Mr. Fedorov's office to discuss the issue.

"He was the driver of innovation, including of drones in the Ukrainian army, even when the Ukrainian armed forces leadership itself did not really want it," he said.

One of Mr. Fedorov's trademark initiatives was a controversial killing-for-points scheme, a data-driven system designed to reward the most effective army units.

## Outsmart the system

Soldiers earned points for confirmed kills or destruction of Russian equipment – verified by uploaded videos – that can be used to purchase equipment, with

league tables ranking the best performing units.

At the Defence Ministry, he is set on developing that approach.

One of his first initiatives is an audit of battlefield losses – ranking commanders based on casualty levels, in an attempt to address high levels of desertion among rank-and-file troops and the unpopularity of mobilisation.

Ukraine "cannot fight the future of war with an old system", Mr. Fedorov said in a statement after his appointment.

He has fans among Ukraine's Western partners, having courted NATO and EU representatives at the Ukraine Defence Contact Group.

"The minister came across as competent, realistic, highly knowledgeable,

and forward-looking," a diplomat at NATO told AFP.

"I strongly believe he can bring something new," said another diplomat at NATO.

"He has the potential to bring faster warfare of the future," they added.

But it is unclear if he can convince the rest of Ukraine's traditional military leadership.

"We can try," said Mr. Sternenko, his advisor. "Much depends on the military command but Mykhailo has a vision of how to outsmart the system."

Opposition lawmaker Solomia Bobrovska, who sits on the parliament's defence committee, and has been briefed by Mr. Fedorov, told AFP: "It's very ambitious and very promising."

# 1. Main Development

- Ukraine's newly appointed Defence Minister **Mykhailo Fedorov is promoting a technology-driven warfare model** — यूक्रेन के नए रक्षा मंत्री मिखाइलो फेदोरोव तकनीक आधारित युद्ध मॉडल को बढ़ावा दे रहे हैं।
  - He believes **modern wars will be fought using data, drones, AI and digital platforms** — उनका मानना है कि आधुनिक युद्ध डेटा, ड्रोन, एआई और डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म के माध्यम से लड़े जाएंगे।
  - The approach aims to **compensate for Ukraine's shortages in manpower, finances and ammunition** — यह रणनीति यूक्रेन की सैनिक, वित्तीय और हथियारों की कमी को संतुलित करने का प्रयास है।
- 

## 2. Who is Mykhailo Fedorov

- Age: **35 years**, youngest Defence Minister in Ukraine's history — 35 वर्ष की आयु में यूक्रेन के इतिहास के सबसे युवा रक्षा मंत्री।
- Previously served as **Minister for Digital Transformation** — पहले डिजिटल ट्रांसफॉर्मेशन मंत्री थे।
- Known for building Ukraine's digital government platform "**Diia**" — यूक्रेन की डिजिटल सरकारी सेवा ऐप "डिया" के निर्माण में भूमिका।

### Importance

- He represents the **tech generation of military leadership** — वह सैन्य नेतृत्व की नई तकनीकी पीढ़ी का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं।

### 3. Key Idea: War as a "Data Platform"

- Fedorov described war as a **system where data decides strategy** — फेदोरोव ने युद्ध को डेटा आधारित प्रणाली बताया।
- Military decisions are guided by **real-time battlefield data** — सैन्य निर्णय वास्तविक समय के युद्ध डेटा पर आधारित होंगे।
- Similar to **Silicon Valley's innovation culture** — यह सिलिकॉन वैली की नवाचार संस्कृति जैसा मॉडल है।

### 4. Key Technologies Used by Ukraine

| Technology              | Role in War           | Description                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Drones                  | Surveillance & attack | यूक्रेन युद्ध में ड्रोन का व्यापक उपयोग |
| Artificial Intelligence | Data analysis         | एआई से लक्ष्य पहचान                     |
| Satellite Internet      | Communication         | स्टारलिनक से सैन्य संचार                |
| Digital Platforms       | Military coordination | डेटा आधारित कमांड प्रणाली               |

## 6. Starlink Satellite Communication

- Ukraine used **Starlink satellite internet from SpaceX** — यूक्रेन ने स्पेसएक्स के स्टारलिक इंटरनेट का उपयोग किया।
- Helps maintain communication when **infrastructure is destroyed** — युद्ध में संचार व्यवस्था बनाए रखने में मदद।

### Importance

- One of the **first examples of private companies supporting war logistics** — युद्ध में निजी कंपनियों की भूमिका का महत्वपूर्ण उदाहरण।
- 

## 7. Data-Driven Military System

Fedorov introduced several digital initiatives:

### Battlefield Data Analytics

- Real-time tracking of **casualties and equipment losses** — युद्ध हानि का डेटा विश्लेषण।

### Ranking Military Units

- Units ranked based on **performance metrics** — प्रदर्शन के आधार पर सैन्य इकाइयों की रैंकिंग।

### Incentive System

- Soldiers receive **points for destroying enemy equipment** — दुश्मन उपकरण नष्ट करने पर सैनिकों को अंक मिलते हैं।

# 10. Economic and Military Impact

## Military Innovation

- Ukraine is becoming a **laboratory for modern warfare technology** — आधुनिक युद्ध तकनीक का प्रयोगशाला।

## Defence Industry

- Growth of **drone manufacturing startups** — ड्रोन उद्योग का तेजी से विकास।

## Global Military Lessons

Many countries studying the war including

- United States
  - NATO
  - China
  - India
-

- Consider the following statements about the Russia-Ukraine war:
- The war has witnessed extensive use of drones for surveillance and attacks.
- Ukraine has used satellite internet services like Starlink for military communication.
- Ukraine is a member of NATO.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3



India Overtakes China as Top Cotton  
Product Supplier to the United States

| Topic / विषय  | Explanation / विवरण   |
|---|---|
| Main Development / मुख्य विकास                            | India became the <b>largest supplier of cotton products to the United States in 2025</b> , surpassing China for the first time in recent years — भारत 2025 में अमेरिका को कपास उत्पादों का सबसे बड़ा आपूर्तिकर्ता बन गया, जिसने हाल के वर्षों में पहली बार चीन को पीछे छोड़ा। |
| Cotton Products / कपास उत्पाद                             | Includes <b>apparel, garments, yarn and home textiles</b> — इसमें कपड़े, वस्त्र, धागा और घरेलू वस्त्र शामिल हैं।  |
| Export Volume / निर्यात मात्रा                            | India exported about <b>0.6 million tonnes of cotton products to the US in 2025</b> — भारत ने 2025 में लगभग 0.6 मिलियन टन कपास उत्पाद अमेरिका को निर्यात किए।   |
| China's Export Decline / चीन के निर्यात में गिरावट        | China's exports to the US dropped to around <b>0.5 million tonnes in 2025</b> — 2025 में चीन का अमेरिका को निर्यात लगभग 0.5 मिलियन टन रह गया।   |
| Reason for China's Decline / चीन की गिरावट के कारण        | US tariffs on Chinese goods ranging <b>from 10% to 125%</b> reduced Chinese competitiveness — चीनी वस्तुओं पर 10% से 125% तक अमेरिकी टैरिफ के कारण चीन की प्रतिस्पर्धा कम हुई।  |
| Supply Chain Diversification / आपूर्ति श्रृंखला विविधीकरण | US retailers diversified sourcing away from China — अमेरिकी कंपनियों ने चीन पर निर्भरता कम करने के लिए अन्य देशों से खरीद शुरू की।  |
| India's Advantage / भारत का लाभ                           | India has a <b>strong textile ecosystem and vertically integrated supply chain</b> — भारत के पास मजबूत वस्त्र उद्योग और एकीकृत आपूर्ति श्रृंखला है।   |

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Quality and Traceability / गुणवत्ता और ट्रेसबिलिटी

Indian textile firms meet **international traceability and quality standards** — भारतीय कंपनियां अंतरराष्ट्रीय गुणवत्ता और ट्रेसबिलिटी मानकों को पूरा करती हैं।

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Other Competitors / अन्य प्रतिस्पर्धी देश

Countries like **Vietnam, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mexico and Cambodia** also increased exports — वियतनाम, बांग्लादेश, पाकिस्तान, मैक्सिको और कंबोडिया ने भी निर्यात बढ़ाया।

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Key Outcome / प्रमुख परिणाम

India emerged as the **leading cotton textile supplier to the US market** — भारत अमेरिका के लिए मुख्य कपास वस्त्र आपूर्तिकर्ता बन गया।

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Fact

Largest cotton producer in the world

Major cotton producing states in India

Cotton growing climate

Soil type

Sowing season

Details

India

Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, Punjab, Haryana

Tropical and subtropical climate

Black cotton soil (Regur soil)

Kharif crop

Rank

1

2

3

4

5

Country

India

China

United States

Brazil

Pakistan



- Consider the following statements regarding cotton production and trade:
  - India is the largest cotton producer in the world.
  - Cotton is primarily a Rabi crop in India.
  - Black soil is suitable for cotton cultivation.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
  - A. 1 and 3 only
  - B. 2 and 3 only
  - C. 1 and 2 only
  - D. 1, 2 and 3



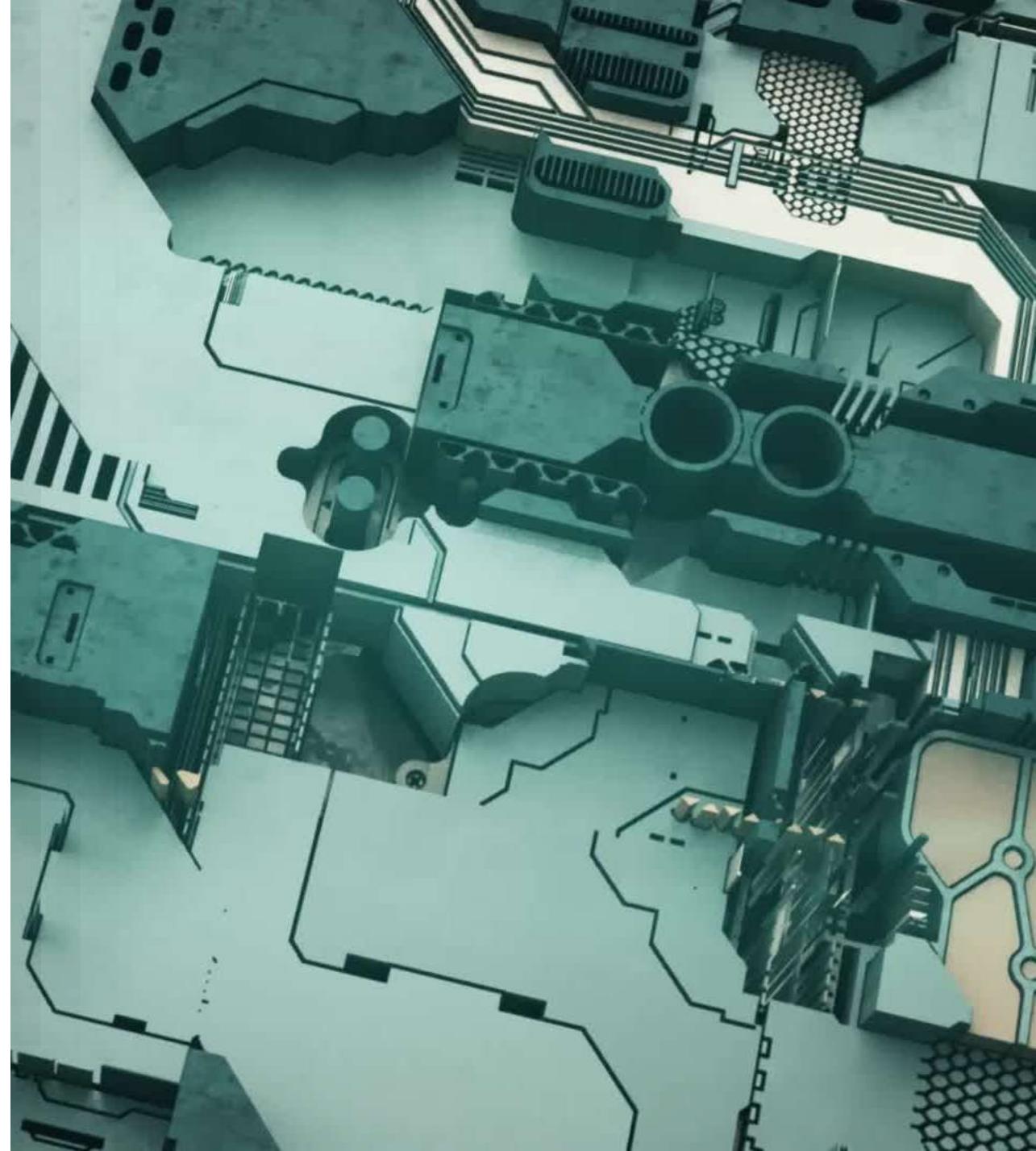
India Builds First Autonomous  
Maritime Shipbuilding Centre in  
Andhra Pradesh

| Topic / विषय                                 | Explanation / विवरण  |
|--|--|
| Main Development / मुख्य विकास               | India is establishing the <b>world's first Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding and Systems Centre in Andhra Pradesh</b> — भारत आंध्र प्रदेश में दुनिया का पहला स्वायत्त समुद्री जहाज निर्माण एवं सिस्टम केंद्र स्थापित कर रहा है। |
| Location / स्थान                             | The centre will be developed at <b>Juvvaladinne Fishing Harbour, Nellore district</b> — यह केंद्र नेल्लोर जिले के जुव्वलाडिने फिशिंग हार्बर में विकसित किया जा रहा है।   |
| Developing Company / विकसित करने वाली संस्था | The project is being developed by <b>Sagar Defence Engineering (Mumbai-based company)</b> — इस परियोजना को सागर डिफेंस इंजीनियरिंग (मुंबई आधारित कंपनी) विकसित कर रही है।  |
| Land Allocation / भूमि आवंटन                 | Andhra Pradesh government allocated <b>29.58 acres of land</b> for the project — आंध्र प्रदेश सरकार ने इस परियोजना के लिए <b>29.58 एकड़ भूमि आवंटित</b> की है।   |
| Strategic Importance / रणनीतिक महत्व         | The centre will strengthen <b>India's maritime defence manufacturing and indigenous technology development</b> — यह केंद्र भारत की समुद्री रक्षा उत्पादन क्षमता और स्वदेशी तकनीक विकास को मजबूत करेगा।                         |
| Direct Sea Access / समुद्री पहुंच            | The facility has <b>direct access to the sea for ship testing and deployment</b> — इस सुविधा को जहाज परीक्षण और तैनाती के लिए सीधे समुद्र तक पहुंच प्राप्त होगी।   |

## Focus on Autonomous Maritime Technologies

| Technology / तकनीक                    | Description / विवरण   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Unmanned Surface Vessels (USVs)       | Ships that operate <b>without onboard human crew</b> — ऐसे जहाज जो बिना चालक दल के चलते हैं।  |
| Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) | Robotic vehicles used for <b>underwater exploration and surveillance</b> — पानी के नीचे अन्वेषण और निगरानी के लिए उपयोग किए जाने वाले रोबोटिक वाहन। |
| Intelligent Navigation Systems        | AI-based navigation systems for autonomous ships — स्वायत्त जहाजों के लिए एआई आधारित नेविगेशन प्रणाली।  |
| Maritime Sensors                      | Sensors used for monitoring marine environments and security — समुद्री निगरानी और सुरक्षा के लिए सेंसर।   |
| Secure Communication Networks         | Communication systems linking ships, drones and command centres — जहाजों, ड्रोन और कमांड सेंटर के बीच सुरक्षित संचार प्रणाली।                       |

- Consider the following statements regarding autonomous maritime technologies:
- Unmanned Surface Vessels operate without onboard human crews.
- Autonomous Underwater Vehicles are used for underwater exploration and surveillance.
- Digital twin technology refers to creating physical copies of ships.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3



Assam's GI-Tagged Joha Rice  
Exported to UK and Italy

| Rice Variety / दूकुर इ हकु n | State / घु   | GI Tag Year / GI इघु अइरु |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Basmati Rice                 | Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Western Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir | 2016                      |
| Joha Rice                    | Assam  | 2017                      |
| Chak-Hao (Black Rice)        | Manipur  | 2020                      |
| Kalanamak Rice               | Uttar Pradesh  | 2013                      |
| Gobindobhog Rice             | West Bengal  | 2017                      |
| Katarni Rice                 | Bihar  | 2018                      |
| Wayanad Jeerakasala Rice     | Kerala   | 2010                      |
| Wayanad Gandhakasala Rice    | Kerala   | 2010                      |
| Navara Rice                  | Kerala   | 2007                      |
| Palakkadan Matta Rice        | Kerala   | 2007                      |
| Pokkali Rice                 | Kerala   | 2008                      |
| Kaipad Rice                  | Kerala   | 2013                      |
| Mappillai Samba Rice         | Tamil Nadu   | 2023                      |
| Seeraga Samba Rice           | Tamil Nadu   | 2023                      |
| Kattuyanam Rice              | Tamil Nadu   | 2023                      |
| Karuppu Kavuni Rice          | Tamil Nadu   | 2023                      |

## Fact

First GI-tagged rice in India

Famous aromatic rice

Black rice variety

Rice associated with Buddha  
tradition

## Details

Navara Rice (Kerala)

Basmati, Joha

Chak-Hao (Manipur)

Kalanamak Rice

| Topic / विषय                       | Explanation / विवरण  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Main Development / मुख्य विकास     | Assam exported its <b>GI-tagged Joha rice to the United Kingdom and Italy</b> , marking the <b>first large-scale export of this variety to Europe</b> — असम ने अपने GI टैग वाले जोहा चावल को यूनाइटेड किंगडम और इटली निर्यात किया, जो यूरोप को इस किस्म का पहला बड़े पैमाने पर निर्यात है। |  |
| Export Quantity / निर्यात मात्रा   | Around <b>25 metric tonnes of Joha rice</b> were exported from Guwahati — गुवाहाटी से लगभग <b>25 मीट्रिक टन जोहा चावल</b> निर्यात किया गया।  |  |
| Export Route / निर्यात मार्ग       | The rice was transported <b>from Guwahati to Kolkata and then shipped to Europe</b> — चावल को गुवाहाटी से कोलकाता ले जाकर वहां से यूरोप भेजा गया।  |  |
| Organising Agency / निर्यात एजेंसी | Export facilitated by <b>APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority)</b> — निर्यात एपीडा (APEDA) द्वारा संचालित किया गया।  |  |
| Ministry / मंत्रालय                | APEDA functions under the <b>Ministry of Commerce and Industry</b> — एपीडा वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत कार्य करता है।  |  |
| Objective / उद्देश्य               | To <b>promote Assam's indigenous agricultural products in global markets</b> — असम के पारंपरिक कृषि उत्पादों को वैश्विक बाजार में बढ़ावा देना।   |  |
| Market Impact / बाजार प्रभाव       | The export reflects <b>growing international demand for India's specialty agricultural products</b> — यह भारत के विशेष कृषि उत्पादों की वैश्विक मांग में वृद्धि को दर्शाता है।   |  |

Product

State

Darjeeling Tea

West Bengal

Basmati Rice

Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh

Joha Rice

Assam

Alphonso Mango

Maharashtra

Muga Silk

Assam



- Consider the following statements regarding Joha rice:
- Joha rice is an aromatic indigenous rice variety grown mainly in Assam.
- Joha rice received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2017.
- APEDA functions under the Ministry of Agriculture.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

A photograph of a rocket launch at night. The rocket is positioned in the center, with a bright, vertical plume of fire and light extending downwards from its base. A massive, billowing cloud of white smoke and steam rises from the launch site, filling the right side of the frame. The background is a dark, deep blue sky. The overall scene is dramatic and powerful.

# NATO Launches “Cold Response” Arctic Military Exercise



 COLD RESPONSE 2026 



**GLOBAL NEWS**

# **NATO LAUNCHES ARCTIC WAR DRILLS IN NORWAY**

Topic / श्रद्धा

Explanation / श्रद्धा

Main Development / रक्षा श्रद्धा

NATO launched its **Arctic military exercise “Cold Response”** — एरिक्टिक श्रद्धा १ ह्रद पड्डाष्ट श्रद्धा फ रक्षा श्रद्धा

Organising Body / ए ग्लोबल श्रद्धा

The exercise is conducted by **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)** — गण १ ह्रद एरिक्टिक North Atlantic Treaty Organization) श्रद्धा ल श्रद्धा नरलर श्रद्धा

Exercise Frequency / ए श्रद्धा

It is a **biennial military exercise** held every two years — गण पड्डाष्ट श्रद्धा ग्लोबल एरिक्टिक श्रद्धा १ ह्रद श्रद्धा

Dates / श्रद्धा

The exercise runs **from 9 March to 19 March 2026** — गण १ ह्रद थ रक्तिक श्रद्धा ग्लोबल लड्डाष्ट श्रद्धा ल एरिक्टिक श्रद्धा

Location / श्रद्धा

Conducted in the **Arctic region**, particularly in northern Europe — गण एरिक्टिक लड्डाष्ट श्रद्धा च ह रक्षा श्रद्धा ल एरिक्टिक श्रद्धा

Strategic Context / श्रद्धा श्रद्धा

The exercise is conducted amid **growing geopolitical tensions and competition in the Arctic region** — गण १ ह्रद एरिक्टिक लड्डाष्ट श्रद्धा लड्डाष्ट श्रद्धा लड्डाष्ट श्रद्धा लड्डाष्ट श्रद्धा

**TOPIC****DETAILS**

NATO Established

1949

Headquarters

Brussels, Belgium

Original Members

12 countries

Article 5

Collective defence clause

- 
- Consider the following statements regarding NATO's Cold Response exercise:
  - Cold Response is a biennial NATO military exercise conducted in the Arctic region.
  - The exercise focuses on training forces to operate in extreme cold environments.
  - NATO headquarters is located in Geneva.
  - Which of the above statements are correct?
  - A. 1 and 2 only
  - B. 2 and 3 only
  - C. 1 and 3 only
  - D. 1, 2 and 3



Sheshnaag-150 Swarm  
Drone Boosts India's  
Unmanned Warfare  
Capability

India's Indigenous  
**LONG-RANGE STRIKE DRONES**



**SHESHNAG-150 & PROJECT KAL**

The rise of low-cost drone warfare



|                                  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Feature / विशेषता                | Shahed-136 (Iran)  | Sheshnaag-150 (India)  |
| Country / देश                    | Developed by Iran (Shahed Aviation Industries) — हथकर जोरघर शरदुशरदुल  | Developed by <b>Newspace Research Technologies, India</b> — करघर इह इरहह जोरघर शरदुशरदुल   |
| Type of Drone / मूक ड्रोन ब्रुवघ | <b>Kamikaze / one-way attack drone</b> — ष वृ त्रलह परकर मूक   | <b>Swarm attack drone system</b> — s करकष शरघर परकर मूक ब्रुवघ   |
| Warfare Concept / युद्ध शरुकर    | Used in <b>mass launch attacks to overwhelm air defence</b> — षनह दुररर रकष करु इघ इगघ शरदुल इरर कडुवघ                   | Designed for <b>AI-enabled coordinated swarm operations</b> — इष ह ष शरघर दुरररर s करकष परकर   |
| Range / रकघडु लरह                | Estimated <b>1000–2500 km</b> depending on version — चणकरण 1000–2500 शररर  | Around <b>1000+ km operational range</b> — चणकरण 1000 शररर दुरुशरइ लरह ( <a href="#">Moneycontrol</a> )                                    |
| Payload / उरघषु लरलर             | Around <b>30–50 kg warhead</b> — चणकरण 30–50 शर चरुकरव शर इरर इ ( <a href="#">Wikipedia</a> )                            | Around <b>25–40 kg warhead</b> — चणकरण 25–40 शर चरुकरव उरघषु ( <a href="#">IDRW</a> )  |
| Endurance / कनरष दुररघ           | Several hours depending on mission — इ ह लरडुलइ कनरष   | Around <b>5+ hours endurance</b> — चणकरण 5 लरडुलइ कनरष ( <a href="#">IDRW</a> )  |
| Guidance / उरघषु ष ब्रुवघ        | Uses <b>GPS / GNSS guidance</b> — नरहहडु ष शरघर रकष दुरर ( <a href="#">Wikipedia</a> )                                   | Uses <b>AI navigation and can work in GPS-denied environments</b> — नरहहडु ष पररुहघ करडु ह उरघषु ष दुरुवघ ( <a href="#">www.ndtv.com</a> ) |
| Operational Role / कहरगुण        | Used widely in <b>Russia-Ukraine war to strike infrastructure</b> — च दुर-गरडु शर रकषहरगुण ( <a href="#">Wikipedia</a> ) | Designed for <b>precision swarm strikes and reconnaissance missions</b> — दुररडु s करकष परकरडु घ शरणरह शरदु ष                              |
| Technology Level / लडु षडुह b घ  | Relatively <b>simple, low-cost loitering munition</b> — दुरघच रघ दुरर चरुकरव रकष ष                                       | <b>AI-driven swarm coordination and modular system</b> — कलु इष ह s करकष दुररुग ब्रुवघ   |
| Launch Method / चरु ब्रुवघ       | Fired from <b>launch racks in large numbers</b> — चरु कष दुरुनह दुररर रकष इररुनरलुष                                      | Can operate in <b>coordinated drone swarms with autonomous control</b> — इ ह मूक शरघडुघ s करकष परकरडुघ दुरु लुष                            |
| Strategic Aim / घर षररडु कषुडु   | <b>Cheap mass attack weapon</b> — दुररडु षनरररडुडु परकरडुडु शरदु   | <b>Smart networked drone warfare capability</b> — कलु षरुडुलु ष शरघर मूक शरु लरलर  |

| Topic / विषय                        | Explanation / विवरण   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Main Development / मुख्य विकास      | India is developing the <b>Sheshnaag-150 long-range swarm attack drone</b> to strengthen its unmanned warfare capability — भारत अपनी मानव रहित युद्ध क्षमता बढ़ाने के लिए <b>शेषनाग-150 लंबी दूरी का स्वार्म अटैक ड्रोन</b> विकसित कर रहा है। |
| Developer / विकसित करने वाली संस्था | Developed by <b>Newspace Research Technologies, Bengaluru</b> — इसे <b>न्यूस्पेस रिसर्च टेक्नोलॉजीज, बेंगलुरु</b> द्वारा विकसित किया जा रहा है।   |
| Type of Drone / ड्रोन का प्रकार     | A <b>long-range swarm strike drone system</b> — यह लंबी दूरी की स्वार्म स्ट्राइक ड्रोन प्रणाली है।  |
| Testing Status / परीक्षण स्थिति     | The drone has completed its <b>maiden flight and is currently under testing</b> — ड्रोन ने पहली उड़ान पूरी कर ली है और वर्तमान में परीक्षण चरण में है।  |
| Strategic Goal / रणनीतिक उद्देश्य   | To build <b>cost-effective indigenous unmanned combat systems</b> — कम लागत वाली स्वदेशी मानव रहित युद्ध प्रणाली विकसित करना।   |

## Global Examples of Low-Cost Combat Drones

| Country       | Drone System                  |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Iran          | Shahed-136 loitering drone    |
| United States | LUCAS unmanned aerial vehicle |
| Turkey        | Bayraktar TB2 drone           |
| Israel        | Harop loitering munition      |

These drones have demonstrated **high effectiveness in modern warfare** — इन ड्रोन ने आधुनिक युद्ध में उच्च प्रभावशीलता दिखाई है।

## Link with Operation Sindoor

| Topic / विषय          | Explanation / विवरण  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Operation Sindoor     | Military operation highlighting the need for rapid drone deployment — सैन्य अभियान जिसने ड्रोन की त्वरित तैनाती की आवश्यकता को उजागर किया। |
| Impact on Development | Accelerated development of indigenous swarm drone systems — स्वदेशी स्वार्म ड्रोन प्रणाली के विकास को गति मिली।                            |

# Word of the day

## **Fortuitous:**

occurring by happy chance

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**Synonyms:** causeless, uncaused

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**Usage:** *It was a fortuitous meeting that led to a lifelong friendship*

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## **Pronunciation:**

newsth.live/fortuitous

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## **International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /fɔ:'tʃu:.ɪ.təs/, /fɔ:'tʃu:.ɪ.təs/

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# Word of the day

## **Abstruse:**

incomprehensible to one of ordinary understanding or knowledge

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**Synonyms:** deep, recondite

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**Usage:** *The professor's lectures were so abstruse that students tended to avoid them.*

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## **Pronunciation:**

<https://newsth.live/E8Vonh>

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## **International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /əb'stru:s/

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Thank you 😊